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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 4633  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5084  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 4289  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 2634  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 5051  
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RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0126  
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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 1295  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 5398  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 7359  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0310  
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RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

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JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

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LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. Islamic Extremism

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Key stories in the media:  
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The Jerusalem Post reported that in an atmosphere of heightened tensions, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev called PM Ehud Olmert yesterday to affirm the ties between the two countries. According to Olmert's office the two leaders also talked about regional and

bilateral moves. The conversation came after Syrian President Bashar Assad arrived in Russia yesterday for a two-day visit during which he is seeking to purchase weapons. Leading media cited Assad's hope that Israel's help to Georgia will work to his advantage. Various media reported that Assad told the Russian newspaper Kommersant that he will consider stationing Russian missiles in his country, and that Russia's conflict with Georgia, in which Moscow says Georgia used Israeli-supplied equipment, underlined the need for Russia and Syria to tighten their defense cooperation. Maariv reported that Olmert told Medvedev that supplying advanced Russian-made weapons to Syria would upset the balance of power in the Middle East. Maariv quoted Medvedev as saying how important it was to Russia that Israel agree to participate in the peace conference about the Middle East, an event that Russia plans to hold in Moscow this coming November. The Jerusalem Post reported that Knesset Speaker Dalia Itzik announced yesterday that she plans to send a group of MKs to examine the situation on the ground in Georgia.

All media reported that new intelligence on Hizbullah's intentions to abduct Israelis abroad prompted the government's counterterrorism unit last week to issue a special warning to travelers, who were advised to take unusual precautions.

Ha'aretz cited a poll according to which Kadima is getting stronger (with FM Tzipi Livni at the helm) and Labor is free-falling (see below).

Channel 10-TV reported last night that the U.S. turned down a request by Defense Minister Ehud Barak to buy Boeing 767 aircraft,

which can be used for mid-air refueling, amid fears that the sale would appear to support an Israeli strike on Iran.

Ha'aretz quoted Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit, a contender for Kadima's leadership, as saying yesterday that Israel must not attack Iran, but only defend itself if attacked. Ha'aretz reported that PM Ehud Olmert has reportedly said in private conversations that Sheetrit is his preferred choice to lead Kadima and the government.

Citing AP, Ha'aretz quoted the UN as saying yesterday that the Quartet plans to meet in late September to discuss progress between Israel and the Palestinians toward a peace agreement.

Ha'aretz quoted a diplomatic source as saying that UNIFIL Force Commander Maj. Gen. Claudio Graziano complained last week that DM Barak refuses to meet with him to discuss the situation along the Lebanese border and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701.

Yediot and other media reported on new developments in the business dealings of DM Barak and his wife, Nili Preil. Preil closed her consulting firm, Tauris, yesterday after Channel 10-TV alleged that the company helped an American businessman exploit the Minister's connections for commercial purposes.

All media reported that Israeli Shahar Zubari won an Olympic bronze medal in the RS-X class windsurfing competition in Qingdao yesterday -- Israel's first medal in the Games.

Ha'aretz published the results of a Dialog poll conducted on Tuesday:

How many seats would each party take today?

Likud (under Netanyahu): 30; Kadima (Mofaz): 30; Labor (Barak): 13. Kadima (under Livni): 28; Likud (under Netanyahu): 28; Labor (Barak): 12.

A Ha'aretz/Dialog poll among Kadima voters found that Livni has a good chance of securing the Kadima primaries in the first round on September 17 by securing the required 40 percent of the vote.

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11. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Far-left columnist Meron Benvenisti, deputy mayor of Jerusalem from 1971 to 1978, wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The binational option is viewed by most Israelis as spelling the destruction of their state, and by most Palestinians as the end of their national liberation movement."

Correspondent Yaakov Lapin wrote on page one of the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Sending an aircraft carrier to Syria has more to do with Russia's paranoid fear of a NATO stranglehold on Moscow than Israel's help, [Ra'anana] Gissin, [a strategic analyst and Ariel Sharon's former spokesman] said."

Block Quotes:

## I. "Moot Argument"

Far-left columnist Meron Benvenisti, deputy mayor of Jerusalem from 1971 to 1978, wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (8/21): "The binational option is viewed by most Israelis as spelling the destruction of their state, and by most Palestinians as the end of their national liberation movement.... This explosive status quo survives due to the combination of several factors: fragmentation of the Palestinian community and incitement of the remaining fragments against each other; enlistment of the Jewish community into support for the occupation regime ... success of the propaganda campaign known as 'negotiations with the Palestinians,' which convinces many that the status quo is temporary ... the silencing of all criticism as an expression of hatred and anti-Semitism; and psychological repugnance toward the conclusion that the status quo is durable and will not be easily changed. It's not nice to admit, and it is a sad forecast, but without accepting this conclusion and learning our lesson from it, change will not be possible."

## II. "Israel Arms Sales Won't Push Russia into Enemy Hands"

Correspondent Yaakov Lapin wrote on page one of the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (8/21): "Sending an aircraft carrier to Syria has more to do with Russia's paranoid fear of a NATO stranglehold on Moscow than Israel's help, [Ra'anana] Gissin, [a strategic analyst and Ariel Sharon's former spokesman] said. The message to the West is simple; move in on our turf and incorporate Russia's satellite states into NATO, and Moscow will move in on an area sensitive to the West. Gissin pointed out that Russia had supplied Syria with weapons before becoming upset at Israel's military aid to Georgia. If the arms sales to Damascus were driven by economic motivation before, now they are driven by strategic considerations, too."

## 12. Islamic Extremism:

Summary:

Israeli Ambassador to Senegal Gideon Bachar wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "As we fight against extremist organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbullah, it is important for us to remember that these organizations are outcasts in the eyes of a great majority of Muslims around the world too."

Block Quotes:

"They're Not All Bin Ladin and Nasrallah"

Israeli Ambassador to Senegal Gideon Bachar wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (8/21): "Since the terror attack on the World Trade Center, there is a growing sense among certain circles in Israel and in the West that Islam is a perilous enemy that must be combated. In the media and the cinema, only violent acts by radical Muslim groups are emphasized. The truth is different: The great majority of the 1.2 billion Muslims around the world struggle for a livelihood, food, education and health. Politics and inter-religious battles do not concern them. And they also want

cooperation and peace with Israel and with the Western world -- and not a battle against them. More than half of the 57 member states in the Organization of the Islamic Conference maintain diplomatic ties with Israel.... The conclusion is that we must beware of adopting a categorical approach, which views Islam as an integral whole that is hostile towards Israel and the Jewish people. As we fight against extremist organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbullah, it is important for us to remember that these organizations are outcasts in the eyes of a great majority of Muslims around the world too. Alongside the legitimate battle for Israel's security, we must focus on building bridges to the Muslim world. The more such contacts exist, the smaller the strength of such extremists as Iran, al-Qaida and Hamas will be. Moreover, Israel also has a supreme interest in keeping the rivalry between Muslims and Christians from turning into a clash of civilizations, from which Israel can only stand to lose. The international community should isolate extremist states, such as Iran and Syria, and terror organizations -- whether these are Christian entities, Muslim entities or others."

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